United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Georgia admitted to membership of the United Nations, becoming the 179th Member State and thirteenth to join this year.

+ Composition announced of United Nations team to observe mass demonstrations in South Africa next week; team scheduled to meet in Johannesburg on Sunday.

+ General Assembly approves Fifth Committee's recommendation to appropriate an additional $15 million for operation of second United Nations Angola Verification Mission.

+ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to hold follow-up conference to International Literacy Year 1990 at Headquarters, from 3 to 6 August.

+ Committee on Racial Discrimination starts two-week session in Geneva on Monday, 3 August; duration of current meeting cut due to Committee's shortage of funds.

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Georgia was admitted to membership of the United Nations this morning, becoming the Organization's 179th Member State and the thirteenth to join this year.

Speaking at the flag-raising ceremony, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed the belief that the contribution of Georgia to the Organization "will be profound and significant, worthy of its stirring and vibrant history as well as its rich and diverse culture."

The Representative of the United States, as co-sponsor of its application and host country, welcomed Georgia's admission, saying that his Government looked forward to this country abiding by its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force, especially as applied to the conflict in South Ossettia.

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He urged continued respect for those principles and all the other revelant principles of the Charter and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. "In this regard we are pleased to note that efforts are underway to implement a cease-fire agreement in South Ossettia and to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict", he said.

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The composition has been announced of the United Nations team being dispatched to observe the mass demonstrations scheduled to take place throughout South Africa next week. Two members are already in the country, having accompanied Cyrus Vance, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, on his recently-concluded mission to South Africa. They are Hisham Omayad of Ghana, who will lead the group, and Shola Omoregie of Nigeria.

The other members of the team are: B.G. Ramcharan (Guyana), J. Renninger (USA), Miriam Freedman (USA), Joan T. Seymour (Guyana), Shigeru Mochida (Japan), Rehana Ahmad-Haque (USA) and Jose Campino (Portugal). They are to leave for London tonight, and will be arriving in Johannesburg on Sunday morning. There they will meet with Mr. Omayad and be briefed on their duties.

The group's mission to the country was requested by the African National Congress (ANC), which is organizing the demonstrations. The South African Government agreed to their coming and discussed modalities for it with Mr. Vance.

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The General Assembly this morning approved without a vote the recommendation of the Administrative and Budgetary (Fifth) Committee that the Assembly appropriate an additional $15 million, including $2.9 million previously authorized, for the operation of the second United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), for the period from 1 January to 31 October.

The Committee had authorized the additional funding by approving a draft resolution yesterday, after consideration of a report of the Secretary-General on financing the Angolan Verification Mission. By the text, the Assembly urges all member States to ensure payment of their assessed contributions to the Mission on time. It also requests that the Secretary-General take all necessary action to ensure that United Nations activities related to the Angolan peace process, including elections, be administered in a coordinated fashion with a maximum of efficiency and economy.

Earlier this month, UNAVEM II reported that it had registered 1.2 million of the estimated 5.3 million voters nationwide. The operation aims to register 2.5 million voters in time for the Angolan elections scheduled for 29 and 30 September.

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will be holding a follow-up conference to International Literacy Year 1990 at United Nations Headquarters, from 3 to 6 August.

The Conference, organized in conjunction with the City University of New York and the Literacy Centre of New York, will examine the demands for literacy skills posed by life in urban areas. It will also seek to identify promising practices, and to map out strategies for the decade ahead.

Mayor David Dinkins of New York is scheduled to attend the opening ceremony on Monday.

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The Committee on Racial Discrimination will be holding its only session for the year in Geneva from Monday, 3 August to Friday, 14 August. The session has been cut back from its usual three weeks to two because of the Committee's critical financial situation. This should also have been its second session of the year, but the spring meeting was cancelled altogether because of the shortage of funds.

The 18-member Committee, charged with monitoring the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was the first body created by the United Nations to review actions taken by States to fulfil their obligations under a specific human rights agreement. The failure of a number of States parties to fulfil their financial obligations under the Convention has led to the present curtailment.

Steps have been taken recently to improve the Committee's financial position. In January, in New York, at the 14th meeting of the States parties to the Convention, a resolution was approved calling for the Secretary-General to provide the necessary staff and facilities for the Committee to perform its functions effectively.

At the session starting on Monday, the Committee will be considering periodic reports by Belgium, Ghana, Costa Rica, Greece, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Maldives, Chile, Yemen and Australia, detailing measures they have adopted to combat racial discrimination.

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